
The Long War: Peace Accords With the Militants and US/NATO Airstrikes in Pakistan

By Fasihuddin

Editorial Abstract: *The author provides a Pakistani perspective on a variety of counterinsurgency efforts in the Northwest Frontier Provinces. He explores perceptions through the filter of regional and international media accounts, noting how Pakistani government leaders and the general population see apparent contradictions in Coalition/NATO actions, versus what they hear via official Western policy messages.*

Despite being a strong ally in the Ongoing Long War on Terror, Pakistan never enjoyed the position of a 'trusted buddy.' US-Pak relations remain tense most of the time, no matter how often either country issues statements of mutual trust and friendship. This tug of war continues, with intermittent and desultory overtures of friendship and alliance. This past summer is typical example of this 'friend-cum-suspected' scenario. US leaders made the same statement as author Daniel Markey at the very introduction of his widely publicized report: "Should another 9/11 type attack take place in the United States, it will likely have its origins in this region." (Council on Foreign Relations: Securing Pakistan's Tribal Belt, July 2008). Similarly, CIA Director Michael Hayden notes the "Security situation along the border presents clear danger to Afghanistan, Pakistan, to the West in general and US in particular" (*New York Times*, 20 April 2008). The US National Intelligence Estimate describes the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), Pakistan's tribal belt, as a safe-haven for Al-Qaeda. The US administration never hid its intention to attack any high value target inside Pakistan—provided they have 'actionable-intelligence.' On the other hand, US Ambassador to Pakistan Anne W. Patterson says "US has no intention to carry out a military operation inside the tribal areas of Pakistan." In August 2007, US Vice President Dick Cheney put it the other way around: "I don't expect Pakistan to invite US troops over to tribal areas to fight Al-Qaeda. Its obviously a sovereign state." Similarly, in a July 2008 meeting with Pakistan Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gillani, President Bush reiterated that the US has to respect Pakistan's sovereignty.

Ironically, this was the day US/NATO forces reportedly killed six civilians in a missile attack in South Waziristan. A retaliatory statement from Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman General Tariq Majid appeared in the news, noting Pakistan will respond accordingly to future such attacks. Interestingly, important Pakistani national newspapers like *The News* and *Daily Dawn* carried all the three items on front page, showing an obvious difference between words and actions.

Every now and then one sees dozens of such 'carrot and stick' or 'threats-cum-rewards' type of statements from the US and NATO, whose notices, seldom appreciate Pakistan's role, and often express concern over peace accords with the militants—and their allegedly 'unstoppable' cross border attacks. "They have sovereign right to make agreements but we have a right to answer if those agreements put our troops and our mission under a threat. It is no real solution if trouble on one side of the border is transferred to the other side." (NATO Spokesman Mark Laity, in Kabul, 25 May 2008). "There is not, nor is there going to be, an incursion of NATO into Pakistan. There is no planning for, no mandate for such an incursion. However, NATO has the right to fire back in self-defence in Pakistan" (NATO spokesman James Appaturi, Brussels, July 2008). "If NATO forces are shot from the other side of the border, there is always the right to self-defence but you will not see NATO forces crossing into Pakistan territory—only blaming Pakistan wont solve problem. It is necessary to involve Pakistan in the process." (NATO Chief Jeap de Hoop Scheffer, Kabul, 25 July 2008). One cannot expect such confusing and threatening-cum-persuading statements will help facilitate

a viable and meaningful dialogue on both sides. Rather, this further aggravates the already confounded relations of half-friend/half-foe partners.

Besides these official US statements expressing worries about Pakistan, there are similar reports by research institutes and scholars. Carnegie Endowment reports carried by *Foreign Policy* journal (Sep-Oct 2008) are taken with a bit of reservation by academic circles in Pakistan, on account of being reportedly politically engineered. Yet the present Terrorism Index is of interest to many around the world. Despite the fact that 70% of the respondents believe the US is not winning the war on terror, 51% think Pakistan is most likely to become the next Al-Qaeda stronghold. Amazingly, instead of looking for the causes of the defeat in the War on Terror, the report identifies Pakistan as Al-Qaeda's 'next resort.' More interesting is the fact that despite 70% of respondents who think that the US is not winning the war on terror, 70% think the world is becoming more dangerous—as compared to 91% of respondents a year ago. This decrease of 21% indicates that with the loss in the War on Terror, the world has become less safe in 2008 than it was in 2007.

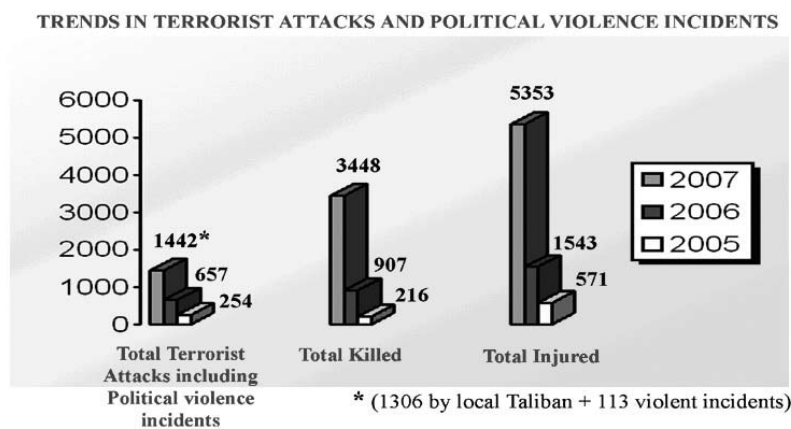
Pakistan's Role in the Long War

Pakistan joined the allied forces in combating global terrorism soon after 9/11, and contrary to popular voices, every successive government adopted and continued the same policies which Pakistan opted for in 2001. Since then, Pakistan deployed more than 110,000 forces in its tribal areas, as well as some settled districts like Hangu and Swat. Further, Pakistan established about 1,100 check posts along Pak-Afghan border, and carried out more than a hundred military operations. In all

these counter-militancy and counter-insurgency actions, Pakistan lost more than 1200 security forces, arrested and killed hundreds of militants, and despite its competency constraints, actively responded to the 'do more' US policy. As a repercussion of military operations in the FATA, law-enforcement agencies and government functionaries were attacked with deadly weapons, bomb blasts and suicide bombings in the urban areas of Pakistan. In a recent security report, the Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies (PIPS) calculated 1442 terrorist attacks, with a total death toll of 3448, and 5353 people injured in 2007. Though lesser than the actual numbers, these figures are still higher than the usual official statistics. The National Police Bureau/ Government of Pakistan National Public Safety Commission reports total bomb blasts in the country as 185 in 2005, and 308 in 2006. (Figure 1).

This is the data for the whole country. If we compare it to the statistics compiled by the office of the Additional Inspector General of Police, North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) it clearly indicates a higher crime trend in the last three years. (Figure 2). These are the official figures for only one province (total 24 districts, i.e; the NWFP), and do not include any figures for the tribal areas.

Being close to the offices responsible for compilation and analysis of such data, this writer believes this is still a much lesser number than the actual fatalities. The figures for the casualties and deaths of the militants are not included, which are otherwise generally inflated by media—for so many reasons. These unfortunate games of figures have made things difficult for impartial researchers and observers. However, this bleak, worst case picture pertains only to human losses. Additionally, one can easily imagine the social, economic, political and psychological cost and other collateral damage to law enforcement agencies (LEAs), effects on the underdeveloped communities, and of course the whole nation. No empirical and verified research on the losses is yet available. However, stories of economic deprivation, social dislocation, political



Source: PIPS (Pakistan Institute for Peace Studies) Security Report 2007 dated: Sep: 10, 2008

Figure 1.

chaos, poor disaster management and psychological depression across the country are horrible and dejecting. For example, more than 100,000 people from Swat and 200,000 people (including women and children) were displaced from Bajaur during recent military operations. Many worries await Internally Displaced People (IDPs) in other parts of the country, where Pakistan has no sound rehabilitation system.

Peace Accords with the Militants

Pakistan has received US \$10 billion in aid during the WOT. It is still a moot point whether this was enough assistance for the Long War, and how far it trickled down to the general public, and other LEAs in urban areas. The general perception is that the story is disappointing on both points. Not the commitment: but the paucity of aid; the conceptual ambivalence; the dearth of political will; the hostile international environment; and the absence of a well-thought counter-terror strategy compelled the government to enter into some mutually acceptable agreements with the militants. Pakistani leaders presumed this initiative was necessary to marginalize hard core militants, segregate foreign Al-Qaeda fighters, politically engage the tribal people, and provide large-scale development and reconstruction of their much-neglected areas. The Government of Pakistan retained the right of selective use of force in all such agreements, yet the arrangement brought only a

temporary halt to ongoing military operations in the tribal areas (as well as in some settled districts). This respite, both for the local militants (Taliban) and the government, gave the general public a 'sigh of relief,' restoring political and social life to areas with minimal economic activities. People across the country welcomed all such initiatives. Prisoners from both sides were released, and promises made not to attack each others' installations, officials and buildings. For the time being, people recognized and admitted government authority. However, due to a bad track record, mutual accusation for absence of honesty of intention on both sides, plus the absence of any third party (powerful guarantor), the jubilation on all peace settlements with the militants was short-lived. These actions turned out to be a volatile, ephemeral and abortive exercise, in much less time than most people expected. These peace deals were never accepted or welcomed by US/NATO forces on the other side of the border—they took them with 'a pinch of salt.' The US, NATO, and the UK issued strong statements against the intentions of Pakistani authorities, and even tried to malign the national security agencies for connivance and tacit support for the militants. Thus far, this was never substantiated with authentic references. Had it not been for such resentment and premature criticism of the peace accords, would the WOT would have been successful in dissociating the local community from

Agreement Date	Name of Tribal Agency/District	Major Party No. I	Major Party No. II	Basic Agreement	Successful/ Broken?
27 Mar 2004	Shakai, South Waziristan	Govt of Pakistan (Corps Commander Peshawar)	Commander Nek Muhammad	Compensation to tribes, stoppage of MO, and registration of foreigners. No attack on Govt. forces.	Unsuccessful with death of Nek Muhammad
2 Feb 2005	South Waziristan Agency	Govt. of Pakistan	Commander Baitullah Mehsud	No sheltering foreign militants. No targeting govt officials/installations. Absolved from past cases against them, but dealt with according to law if found involved in anti-state activities.	Still intact
5 Sep 2006	North Waziristan Agency	Political Agent NWA (Rep of Govt)	Utmanzai tribe on the behest of militants	Govt. would release all those arrest during operation. Restoration of tribal benefits removed of check post	Ended 15 July 2007
20 April 2008	Swat	Govt. of NWFP	Tehrik-i-Nifaza-i-Shariat-i-Muhammadi (TNSM) [Movement for Restoration of Islamic Law)	Cordial relations and release of TNSM Chief, Sufi Muhammad.	Still intact
9 July 2008	Khyber Agency	Govt of Pakistan	Afridi Malik Din Khel tribe on the behest of Lashkar-e-Islami	LI member would not challenge govt writ. Govt. would not interfere in tribal customs. In case of violation LI would pay a fine. Ongoing operation would end 10 July 2008. All arrested persons released.	Unknown

Table 1. Important peace accords with militants/Taliban in tribal areas/districts. (Author)

the hardliners, extremists and Al-Qaeda Taliban? NATO/US airstrikes on the occasion of a successful agreement was another big reason for these failures. Significantly, the peace accords were basically enshrined in the socio-cultural context of the tribal community, thus acceptable to them. Before dealing with the tribal community, *we have to understand their tribal mindset, their culture and their way of doing business*. We can read between the lines to find common salient features of successful peace deals, to easily identify how effective they would be if implemented wholeheartedly and with fairness, equity, and if guaranteed by a powerful third party—maybe from the local noncombatant population or some powerful Islamic country. This writer has gathered a number of these agreements, (Table 1). The salient features common to all these accords provides insight into the agreements:

- No cross-border movement for militant activity in neighboring Afghanistan
- Government guarantee not to undertake any ground or air operations against the warriors
- Administration bound to resolve the issues through local customs and traditions and Jirga (Consultative body of elders)

- Army will remove checkpoints in the regions and tribal Khasaddar and Levy force will take over
- Foreigners will have to leave Pakistan and/or live peacefully
- No attack on LEAs and State property
- Prisoners arrested during operations be released, no arrest again
- Govt compensation for loss of life and property of innocent tribesmen
- Withdrawal of criminal cases against tribesmen
- Return of vehicles and weapons
- Govt to stop militants who cross border to attack US forces in Afghanistan.

US-NATO Airstrikes and Missile Attacks

According to Daniel Markey's earlier quoted report, "Pakistan constitutes one of the most important and difficult challenges facing US foreign policy. What is at stake is considerable by any measures." "Pakistan is a strategic friend of the United States, but one that often appears unable or unwilling to address a number of vexing security concerns." In *Securing Pakistan's Tribal Belt* Markey has identified a number of policy choices for US vis-à-vis Pakistan and its role in the WOT. Unfortunately, much of Markey's report depends on website content, and lacks

a first hand knowledge of the psyche, emotions and long history of the people in this particular area. His suggestion for 'US counterterror attacks within Pakistan (whether Predator [Unmanned Aerial Vehicle] strikes, limited ground incursions or other means) 'to eliminate the worst terrorists and militants whenever possible' and in such cases 'to isolate Pakistan and reduce its access to dangerous technologies and resources' is typical of a US foreign policy attitude towards Pakistan. Such an approach has never attained a place of respect in the eyes of Pakistan's considerable (170 million) population. It is always because of these unfriendly suggestions that the US media is so influenced, and thus carries hostile, prejudiced and instigating stories. Though published in the name of "freedom of speech," these stories cause wrong messages with unfriendly implications. As noted earlier, there are numerous statements and reports urging US/NATO forces to enter into Pakistan in 'hot pursuit' of Al-Qaeda's high value targets—which otherwise never proved fruitful. Instead, innocent people and even Pakistan's security forces are killed and injured. Pakistan's usual rhetoric and official statement would go like this: "foreign troops shall not be allowed to operate inside Pakistan" (Prime Minister Gillani and President

Musharraf, July 2008). Yet who asks this question? War is not fought with prior permission from the enemy. The peace negotiations and settlements have been seriously criticized on account of being a technique for providing breathing space for Al-Qaeda and Taliban to regroup, reunite, refuel, reorganize and rethink fighting strategies. At times, it becomes difficult to appreciate the insurgencies and militancy are a problem inside Pakistan's tribal belt and in few of its urban areas. The worries are felt mostly by US/NATO forces far away in Afghanistan. Whereas the local militants or insurgents have their specific local agendas, which though not acceptable to the government, are not linked with the troops in Helmand or Kabul. This is how US/NATO decision makers are augmenting the situation in an unnecessary dramatic series of chain reactions. Some analysts call this a US 'overdoing' or 'over-reacting' policy. This doesn't mean the militancy inside Pakistan's territories has no effect on the other side of the border. Of course there is a link, but we should not reinforce a weak connection by unwarranted and illogical instigative incursions. No one denies the presence of foreign militants in the tribal belt, but are the periodic airstrikes successful as a results-oriented approach for this much-trumpeted 'hot pursuit'? Moreover, if the air raids are carried out inside Pakistani territories to chase and hit the militants, then the Taliban infiltration must be from Afghanistan into Pakistan and not vice versa.

Before these attacks, even the media carried disturbing news like 'The Problem is Pakistan' (Morton Abramowitz, *Newsweek*) recalling the old war in Afghanistan with the comment that "the single biggest reason for the Soviet's failure was Pakistan." The comparison between the causalities of Coalition Forces in Afghanistan and Iraq was made with the conclusion that "Pakistan was contributing to Afghanistan's instability by failing to prevent militants from crossing into Afghanistan." Cross border attacks on US troops in eastern Afghanistan have gone up 40% in recent

months." "US Defence Secretary Robert Gates attributes the increase to cease-fire accords between Pakistani authorities and Islamic militants, under which Islamabad agreed to pull its military out of areas controlled by the radicals in exchange for their promise not to attack government institutions. The deals meant that the pressure was taken off the militants who are now free to be able to cross the border and create problems for us, said Gates." (*Time*, 21 July 2008)

NATO/US airstrikes from across the border have become routine, not exceptional. It's difficult to find a newspaper which doesn't carry a report on violation of Pakistan's territorial borders by US drones and NATO aircraft. Exact statistics for all such transgressions, intended for intelligence gathering or actual attacks, are not compiled by our local offices, nor available to this author. However, the most sensational and overt attacks are recorded by local agencies and the writer. Table 2 features some notable attacks. No one has regained lost opportunities for peace agreements, nor regained or replaced these attacks with the military power show. Rather, the US/NATO attacks have caused greater damage to the WOT, and brought an exceedingly bad name to NATO forces whose jurisdiction and authority is limited to Afghanistan, and not beyond its borders. We have observed severe criticism of US policies in every corner of the country. Public resentment against the War on Terror showed a manifold rise, and increased Taliban infiltration

(Talibanization) due to the tribal characteristics of revenge and bravery ensued. [See "The Impact of Collateral Damage on the Taliban Insurgency," *IO Sphere*, Fall 2008]. Undoubtedly, Al-Qaeda must capitalize on public anti-US sentiments. Suicide attacks became the norm in the wake of Coalition cross border attacks, in an extremist bid to keep the government from supporting US policies. Such suicide bombings have a telling impact on Pakistan's internal security arrangement. Islamic political parties who lost the February 2008 general elections are gaining ground again, on the pretext of indifference showed by the secular forces towards US/NATO strikes. Moreover, these periodic and now successive airstrikes have badly inhibited development and reconstruction processes in the tribal belt, as well as peace negotiations for non-committed communities' disengagement.

The only overt justification for these NATO/US raids given so far by Western circles is the 'hot pursuit' of Al-Qaeda leaders. With every such raid, the Coalition claims success in hunting down names. Senior analyst and renowned journalist Rhimullah Yousafzai comments on the first US ground forces' operation on Pakistani soil on September 4, 2008: "The US Special Forces raid in South Waziristan was without doubt due to the faulty intelligence but the Americans are not in the habit of admitting their mistake or apologizing for killing innocent people. And, in dealing with Pakistan, the US

Date	Name of Tribal Agency/ District	Place	Killed	Wounded	Other Damage
June 10, 2008	Mohmand Agency	Goraparri Post Teh: Safi	12 Friendly, 8 enemy	18	2 trucks
Aug 13, 2008	South Waziristan Agency	Anoor Adda Shangoona Musa Mir Khel	16	23	
September 3, 2008	South Waziristan Agency	Anoor Adda	20 Friendly		
September 8 2008	North Waziristan Agency	Madrasah Maulvi Jalaluddin Haqqani at Danday Darpa Khel village Miranshah	13 Friendly, 12 enemy		

Table 2. Representative Press reports of NATO/US Airstrikes on Pakistan Territory (Author)

has consistently justified its unilateral attacks in FATA by simply claiming that someone important in the Al-Qaeda hierarchy was the target. It is another matter that all instances of 'actionable intelligence' until now have proved wrong or inadequate in getting some high-value target as Zawahiri." (*The News Daily*, Islamabad, 14 Sep 2008)

Current Situation

It's time for a complete policy transformation, and a more enlightened approach. We have to understand the limitations of each group committed to the cause of this 'civilizational transformation' through awareness, education, civic amenities, alternative dispute resolution, employment, political freedom, womens' emancipation, health service delivery, and substitute crops, etc. The escalation in the US/NATO attacks in the first week of September 2008 generated a strong public reaction in Pakistan, manifested in protest and condemnation resolutions passed by the NWFP Provincial Assembly, National Assembly and the Senate of Pakistan. The language of the resolutions is of extreme anger and resentment, using words like 'outrageous,' 'instigative' and 'uncalled for incursions.' The Upper House (Senate) Resolution No. 10-46/2008-Q, the Lower House (National Assembly) Resolution No. F.28(1/2008-L) and the NWFP Assembly Resolution No. 125, all came on 4 Sep 2008 in response to the first on ground operations and airstrikes by Coalition/ISAF troops on the village of Zulahi, near Angoor Adda in South Waziristan. The language of all of these resolutions is the same: "The attack has resulted in loss of precious lives including women and children. [The attack] is a gross violation of Pakistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity. It also undermines the basic norms of International law and contradicts the very basis of cooperation between Pakistani security forces and Coalition/ISAF forces in Afghanistan. Any incursion inside our territory and resulting loss of innocent lives is unacceptable. This matter may be taken up strongly with member countries of

the ISAF." These resolutions, while reiterating "Pakistan's resolve to combat all forms and manifestations of terrorism that constitute and threat to the vital interests of Pakistan," also recommend that "the government should convey in clear terms to the ISAF forces that such violation of our sovereignty is bound to force fundamental review of our foreign policy."

Owing to the public demand for protection of Pakistan's borders and as a national duty of the Pakistani Forces, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Ashfaq Parvez Kiyani announced on 10 Sep 2008 "no external force is allowed to conduct operations inside Pakistan; the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country will be defended at all cost." He categorically clarified "there is no question of any agreement or understanding with the coalition forces whereby they are allowed to conduct operations on our side of the border." He further advised the Coalition should display strategic patience, avoid unilateral approaches and reiterated that the right to conduct operations against militants inside own territory is solely the responsibility of the respective armed forces. The COAS's statement was carried as a lead story on front pages, and mostly with his photograph. However, some newspapers carried another statement alongside that of the COAS, which came from US Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Mike Mullen, saying, "The US military faced with rising insurgent violence in Afghanistan and will revise its strategy for the region to include militant safe havens in neighboring Pakistan" and that "he was looking at a new, more comprehensive strategy for the region that would cover both side of the Pak-Afghan border." On the following day (9/11) the leading news, carrying a photo of the Director General ISPR Major General Athar Abbas, was that "from now onward Pakistan Army was ordered to retaliate against any action by foreign troops inside the country." Ironically, the Pak-Army spokesman's statement was again put together on the same page with a photo of President Bush, quoting

from a *New York Times* article: "US President George W. Bush has secretly approved order allowing US forces to conduct ground operations in Pakistan without that government's prior approval as the situation in the tribal area is not tolerable."

Notwithstanding the rhetoric, allegations, counter allegations and verbosity of these statements, US/NATO airstrikes continued on this same day. The COAS's announcement to defend the country's sovereignty at any cost had significant government and public response. The Prime Minister, one of the Chief Ministers, and religious and opposition leaders regarded the COAS statement as 'the true voice of the public and their representation' and an 'encouraging step.' This is significant: to realize whose voice is the public representation, and who has the ultimate power in deciding vital strategic issues. More notable is whether the effect generated was part of a witting design or not—but it had impact across national and international audiences, maybe unwittingly. Nevertheless, it reinforces the idea that the general masses of Pakistan welcome a brave, courageous leader rather than an indecisive Prime Minister, no matter how many popular votes he gained in the elections. Former President Musharraf's initial popularity was not due to his uniform, but his seven point agenda of development and action against 'culprit elements' of society—the lack of fulfillment initiated his downfall, and his exit.

Cultural Context

The problems of Pakistani society lie within its social-psychological context. Anyone who could fight the menace of feudalism and corruption would be the true Mandela of the nation, and a second founder of the country. People welcome bold, straightforward statements and policies, but when not fulfilled to expectations, they lose respect for the leader and his party. This is what happened with most of the military rulers of the country. Modern examples of this problem continue. Local newspapers carried a *Washington Post* story (12 Sep

2008) that present US attacks, up to six miles inside Pakistan's territory, was granted by the Pakistan's COAS in his meeting with Admiral Mike Mullen in Aug 2008. The Pakistan Army was quick to dispel and negate all such reports, and renewed its commitment to defend the country at any cost. However, the greatest setback came from the Prime Minister (interestingly with the same photo of the COAS three days prior), saying, "Pakistan can't wage war with the US and the issue of Pakistan's territorial integrity will be taken at international level through diplomacy." The situation gave rise to further confusion and deep resentment from opposition parties. The general public cannot make up its mind about the clear-cut demarcation of roles and responsibilities of various national institutes, as the media is replete with assumptions, speculations, stories and analyses.

Nowadays the US/NATO periodic attacks have now become a declared policy of the US, amid speculation of NATO reservation on its authority beyond Afghan's borders. Some analysts think President Bush has become impatient to have some phenomenal success in Afghanistan before leaving office, in order to satisfy the US masses, especially about "No.1" and "No.2," the reported CIA codification for Bin-Laden and Al-Zawahiri, whose whereabouts are still unknown despite billions of dollars from the US taxpayers. Afghanistan President Hamid Karzai's impatience is similar to President Bush's, as Karzai too faces new elections in 2009.

History Repeats

It does not require detailed analysis to predict the ultimate outcome of incessant US/NATO incursions upon Pakistan territory. If we ignore Pakistan's nuclear and missile capabilities and its huge army, even then Pakistan is a country of 170 million people, including the fierce tribal fighters who will at once turn into 'holy warriors' (mujahideen) from their current status of being dubbed as 'militants' and 'miscreants.' This will be a replay of 'Islam versus the Soviets,' the outcome of which is very much evident on today's map of the

world. Two statements characterize the problem:

1) *"There is American presence in the area, but we can't just send in troops. If we did, we could have another Vietnam, and the United States can't afford that right now"* (US Commissioner John Lehman, Daily Times Feb 28, 2003-Quoted in "Al-Qaeda Fights Back Inside Pakistani Tribal Areas," Amir Rana & Rohan Gunaratna, 2007)

2) *"In committing the alliance to sustained ground combat operations in Afghanistan... NATO has bet its future. If NATO were to fail, alliance cohesion will be at grave risk. A moribund or unraveled NATO would have a profoundly negative geostrategic impact."* (General James Jones, former NATO Supreme Allied Commander, Quoted in *Descent into Chaos*, Ahmed Rashid, Penguin Books, 2008).

Conclusions

In the wake of domestic criticism and excessive strikes by coalition forces, the new President of Pakistan Mr. Asif Ali Zardari visited the United Kingdom, appearing in news photos with Prime Minister Gordon Brown bearing the caption: "Asif finds UK on its side and sees no more US raids." The encouraging news accompanied the arrival of Admiral Michael Mullen to Pakistan on 16 Sep

2008, to meet Pakistani political and military leadership. The US Embassy in Islamabad noted in an official statement, "the US is committed to respect Pakistan's sovereignty and to develop further US-Pak cooperation and coordination on the critical issues that challenge the security and well-being of the people of both countries."

Unfortunately, Admiral Mullen's statement didn't create any credible assurance in the minds of the government or general public, as it came at nearly the same time as another attack on Pakistani territory— which reportedly killed seven people. The corresponding news headline: "US Drone Attack Pokes Fun at Mullen's Assurance." The Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Shah Mehmood Quraishi, described the Mullen's statement and the subsequent attack as indicative of an 'institutional disconnect' on part of the US, pointing towards a possible divergence of opinions between the State Department and Pentagon. However, the 'War on Terror' has become 'Long' and is not going to end very soon. Issues of sovereignty, policy, and cultural understanding must be addressed. It is still too early to predict what exactly the Long War will bring to the people of the US, Pakistan, Afghanistan and the community at large. 